



Michael Wynne

gave competing testimony May 21 on pending legislation to streamline the funding and oversight of military test and training facilities. The bill would, among other things, create an organization to manage such facilities and reserve a portion of service funding for infrastructure improvements. Those recommendations were in a December 2000 report from the task force that reviewed the operations of such facilities.

Michael Wynne, deputy undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology, and logistics, testified that he and other senior DOD officials opposed the legislation in its current form out of concern that it would further prolong the acquisition cycle. Specifically, he said, "We believe that centralized management likely would not resolve the problem of range management but would result in a new office that will require extra reporting, extra financial management, and ultimately delay effective management."

Moreover, he said, the proposed bill fails to distinguish between the operational testing of weapons systems and operational training exercises conducted by the services. Wynne believes giving one central office the authority to manage both kinds of testing threatens the balance between testing and training that each service manages.

Wynne also expressed concern

about a provision in the bill that would require the secretary of defense or the director of operational test and evaluation to approve any test waivers or exemptions. "This provision removes any flexibility in testing, which is undesirable when we are weighing a system's readiness against the need to provide it to the warfighter," he said.



Boost in aeronautics R&D?

On May 2, Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.) introduced the Aeronautics R&D Revitalization Act of 2002, which addresses concerns regarding the decline in federal aeronautics funding and the aerospace workforce. The bill would establish an initiative to develop the technologies needed to maintain U.S. leadership in aeronautics and aviation.

Since the 1980s, the U.S. has cut funding for aerospace R&D by roughly 50%. At the same time, the country has seen its share of the world aerospace market shrink, from a high of approximately 70% to less than 50% today.

In addition, the European Union has announced its plan to attain world dominance in aviation and the aerospace market. In its report, "European Aeronautics: A Vision for 2020," the EU laid out an aggressive plan to win aerospace global leadership within two decades. The declining federal investment in civil aviation R&T, says Larson, directly and adversely affects national security, balance of trade, national leadership, market share, jobs, and engineering competence.

The bill reverses the decline in aeronautics and aviation R&D at NASA by doubling the federal investment to \$1.15 billion over five years and increasing FAA R&T accounts to \$550 million in the same period. It also establishes an Office of Aeronautics at NASA to oversee research in noise and emissions reduction, rotorcraft, and supersonic transport. In addition, it creates professional training and scholarship programs at NASA to address workforce issues. The bill seeks to improve the national air transportation system through enhanced NASA-NOAA collaboration in weather forecasting, and through funding for FAA research to increase the air traffic system's capacity, safety, and efficiency.



Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.)

H.R. 4653 was referred to the subcommittee on space and aeronautics for consideration and now has over 20 bipartisan cosponsors. The bill could be integrated into the language of the FY04 NASA Authorization Act as an amendment or be reported out of the Science Committee as a separate bill. Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) plans to introduce a companion bill in the Senate with bipartisan support.

Aerospace Commission hearing

Marty Kress, AIAA's vice president for public policy, presented testimony before the Presidential Commission on the Future of the U.S. Aerospace Industry at its May 14 public hearing. The institute was asked for its view of "A Space Vision for 2050 and the Key Enablers to Achieve It."

Kress' testimony stressed that a national space vision must be based on a realistic assessment of the current situation, including that of the U.S. aerospace workforce and the future availability of needed intellectual resources. "Our team is not as deep as it used to be," he said. "We are going to have to recruit a lot of new talent.... We need to ensure they have career opportunities in which to apply their new skills and talents when they graduate; hiring freezes in R&D agencies are a nonstarter."